

# FRIDAY, THE 13th

By Thomas W. Lawson

CHAPTER VI.—Continued.

She had drawn his head down close to her face, and her great blue eyes searched his as though they would go to his very soul. She was a child in her simple appeal for him to allow her to see his heart, to see that there was nothing black there.

As she gazed her beautiful hands played through his hair as do a mother's through that of the child she is soothing in sickness.

"Bob, speak to me, speak to me," she begged, "tell me there was no dishonor in the getting of those millions. Tell me no one was made to suffer as my father and I have suffered. Tell me that the suicides and the convicts, the daughters dragged to shame and the mothers driven to the madhouse as a result of this panic, cannot be charged to anything unfair or dishonorable that you have done. Bob, oh, Bob, answer! Answer no, or my heart will break; or if, Bob, you have made a mistake, if you have done that which in your great desire to aid me and my father seemed justifiable, but which you now see was wrong, tell it to me, Bob, dear, and together we will try to undo it. We will try to find a way to atone. We will give the millions to the last, last penny to those upon whom you have brought misery. Father's loss will not matter. Together we will go to him and tell him what we have done, what we have lived through, tell him of our mistake, and in our agony he will forget his own. For such a horror has my father of anything dishonorable that he will embrace his misery as happiness when he knows that his teachings have enabled his daughter to undo this great wrong. And then, Bob, we will be married, and you and I and father and mother will be together, and be, oh, so happy, and we will begin all over again."

"Beulah, stop; in the name of God, in the name of your love for me, don't say another word. There is a limit to the capacity of a man to suffer, even if he be a great, strong brute like myself, and, Beulah, I have reached that limit. The day has been a hard one."

His voice softened and became as a tired child's.

"I must go into the hustle of the street, into the din and sound, and get down my nerves and get back my head. Then I shall be able to think clear and true, and I will come back to you, and together we will see if I have done anything that makes me unfit to touch the cheek and the hands and the lips of the best and most beautiful woman God ever put upon earth. Beulah, you know I would not deceive you to save my body from the fires of this world, and my soul from the torture of the damned, and I promise you that if I find that I have done wrong, what you call wrong, what your father would call wrong, I will do what you say to atone."

He took her hand between his hands, gently, reverently, and touching his lips to her glorious golden hair, he went away.

Beulah Sands turned to me. "Please, Mr. Randolph, go with him. He is soul-dazed. One can never tell what a heart sorely perplexed will prompt its owner to do. Often in the night when I have got myself into a fever from thinking of my father's situation, I have had awful temptations. The agents of the devil seek the wretched when none of those they love are by. I have often thought some of the blackest tragedies of the earth might have been averted if there had been a true friend to stand at the wrong one's elbow at the fatal minute of decision and point to the sun behind, just when the black ahead grew unendurable. Please follow Mr. Brownley than you may be ready, should his awakening to what he has done become unbearable. Tell him the dread-morrows are never as terrible actually as they seem in anticipation."

I overtook Bob just outside the office. I did not speak to him, for I realized that he was in no mood for company. I dropped in behind, determined that I would not lose sight of him. It was almost one o'clock. Wall street was at its meridian of frenzy, every one at a wild rush. The day's doings had packed the always crowded money lane. The newswires were shouting afternoon editions.

"Terrible panic in Wall street. One man against millions. Robert Brownley broke 'the street.' Made twenty millions in an hour. Bank failed. Wreck and ruin everywhere. President suicide." Bob gave no sign of hearing. He strode with a slow, measured gait, his head erect, his eyes staring ahead, a man thinking, thinking, thinking for his salvation. Many hurrying men looked at him, some with an expression of unutterable hatred, as though they wanted to attack him. Then again there were those who called him by name with a laugh of joy; and some turned to watch him in curiosity. It was easy to pick the wounded from those who shared in his victory, and from those who knew the frenzied finance buzz-saw only by its buzz. Bob saw none. Where could he be going? He came to the head of the street of coin and crime and crossed Broadway. His path was blocked by the fence surrounding old Trinity's churchyard. Grasping the planks in either hand he stared at the crumbling headstones of those guardians of Mammon who once walked the earth and fought their heart battles, as he was walking and fighting, but who now knew no ten o'clock, no three, who looked upon the stock-gamblers and dollar-trailers as they looked upon the worms that honeycombed their headstones' bases. What thoughts went through Bob Brownley's mind only his Maker knew. For minutes he stood motionless, then he walked down Broadway.

He went into the Battery. The benches were crowded with that jet-sam and dotsam of humanity that New York's mighty sewers throw in armies upon her inland beaches at every sunrise. Here a sudden brute sleeping off a prolonged debauch, there a lad whose frankness of face and homespun clothes and bewildered eyes spelt "from the farm and mother's watchful love." On another bench an Italian woman who had a half-dozen future dollar kings and social queens about her, and whose clothes told of the immigrant ship just into port. Bob Brownley apparently saw none. But suddenly he stopped. Upon a bench sat a sweet-faced mother holding a sleeping babe in her arms, while a curly-pated boy nestled his head in her lap and slept through the magic lanes and fairy woods of dream-land. The woman's face was one of those that blend the confidence of girlhood with the uncertainty of womanhood. 'Twas a pretty face, which had been plainly tagged by its Maker for a light-hearted trip through the world, but it had been seared by the iron of the city.

"Mr. Brownley—" She started to rise.

He gently pushed her back with a "hush," unwilling to rob the sleepers of their heaven.

"What are you doing here, Mrs. —?" He halted.

"Mrs. Chase. Mr. Brownley, when I went away from Randolph & Randolph's office I married John Chase; you may remember him as a delivery clerk. I had such a happy home and my husband was good; I did not

lord. I saw Bob take from his pocket his memorandum-book, write something upon a leaf, tear it out and hand it to the woman, touch his hat, and before she could stop him, stride away. I saw her look at the paper, clasp her hands to her forehead, look at the paper again and at the retreating form of Bob Brownley. Then I saw her, yes, there in the old Battery park, in the drizzling rain and under the eyes of all, drop upon her knees in prayer. How long she prayed I do not know. I only know that as I followed Bob I looked back and the woman was still upon her knees. I thought at the time how queer and unnatural the whole thing seemed. Later, I learned to know that nothing is queer and unnatural in the world of human suffering; that great human suffering turns all that is queer and unnatural into commonplace. Next day Bessie Brown came to our office to see Bob. Not being able to get at him she asked for me.

"Mr. Randolph, tell me, please, what shall I do with this paper?" she said. "I met Mr. Brownley in the Battery yesterday. He saw I was in distress, and he gave me this, but I cannot believe he meant it," and she showed me an order on Randolph & Randolph for a thousand dollars. I cashed her check and she went away.

From the Battery Bob sought the wharves, the Bowers, Five Points, the hot-houses of the under world of America. He seemed bent on picking out the haunts of misery in the misery-infested metropolis of the new world. For two hours he tramped and I followed. A number of times I thought to speak to him and try to win him from his mood, but I refrained. I could see there was a soul battle waging and I realized that upon its outcome might depend Bob's salvation. Some seek the quiet of the woods, the soothing rustle of the leaves, the peaceful ripple of the brook when battling for their soul, but Bob's woods appeared to be the shadowy places of misery, his rustling leaves the hoarse din of the multitude, and his brook's ripple the tears and tales of the man-damned of the great city, for he stopped and conversed with many human derelicts that he met on his course. The hand of the clock on Trinity's steeple pointed to four as we again approached the of-

ice of Randolph & Randolph. Bob was now moving with a long, hurried stride, as though consumed with a fever of desire to get to Beulah Sands. For the last 15 minutes I had with difficulty kept him in sight. Had he arrived at a decision, and if so, what was it? I asked myself over and over again as I plowed through the crowds.

Bob went straight to Beulah Sands' office, I to mine. I had been there but a moment when I heard deep, guttural groans. I listened. The sound came louder than before. It came from Beulah Sands' office. With a bound I was at the open door. My God, the sight that met my gaze! It haunted me even now when years have dulled its vividness. The beautiful, quiet, gray figure that had grown to be such a familiar picture to Bob and me of late, sat at the flat desk in the center of the room. She faced the door. Her elbows rested on the desk; in her hand was an afternoon paper that she had evidently been reading when Bob entered. God knows how long she had been reading it before he came. Bob was kneeling at the side of her chair, his hands clasped and uplifted in an agony of appeal that was supplemented by the awful groans.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)



Upon a Bench Sat a Sweet-Faced Mother Holding a Sleeping Babe in Her Arms.

have to typewrite any longer. These are our two children."

"What are you doing here?" The tears sprang to her eyes; she dropped them, but did not answer.

"Don't mind me, woman. I, too, have hidden hells I don't want the world to see. Don't mind me; tell me your story. It may do you good; it may do me good; yes, it may do me good."

I had dropped into a seat a few feet away. Both were too much occupied with their own thoughts to notice me or any one else. I could not overhear their conversation, but long afterward, when I mentioned our old stenographer, Bessie Brown, to Bob, he told me of the incident at the Battery. Her husband, after their marriage, had become infected with the stock-gambling microbe, the microbe that gnaws into its victim's mind and heart day and night, while ever fever grows the "get rich, get rich" fever. He had plunged with their savings and had drawn a blank. He had lost his position in disgrace, and had landed in the bucket-shop, the sub-cellar pit of the big stock exchange hall. From there a week before he had been sent to prison for theft, and that morning she had been turned into the street by her land-

lady. I did not speak to him, for I realized that he was in no mood for company. I dropped in behind, determined that I would not lose sight of him. It was almost one o'clock. Wall street was at its meridian of frenzy, every one at a wild rush. The day's doings had packed the always crowded money lane. The newswires were shouting afternoon editions.

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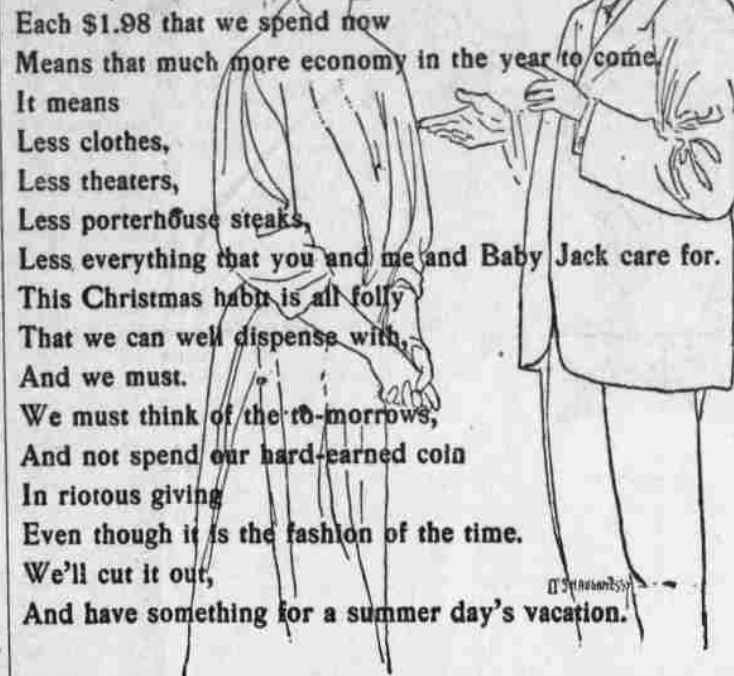
—Eugene Willoughby in The Ocean.

# THE SAME OLD STORY

THE MAN ON DECEMBER 1

Now wifey let us be sensible this Christmas time. Let us not spend our substance on Each chic and child. Of every forty-second cousin we can think of. Each \$1.98 that we spend now Means that much more economy in the year to come.

It means Less clothes, Less theaters, Less porterhouse steaks, Less everything that you and me and Baby Jack care for. This Christmas habit is all folly. That we can well dispense with. And we must. We must think of the to-morrows, And not spend our hard-earned coin In riotous giving. Even though it is the fashion of the time. We'll cut it out, And have something for a summer day's vacation.



CHRISTMAS, crowned with mirth and cheer, Sweet magnet-night of all the year, From field and city, camp and foam, Where'er our loved ones absent roam, Thy subtle spell from far and near Can draw them home.

Gathered round thy friendly fire, Sisters, mother, sons, and sire, Once more in fond affection meet, To love-set time their bosoms beat, And every hearth's a happy quire Of singers sweet.

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# Brief Christmas Tales

MAYOR STOEY of Atlantic City was talking about Christmas dinners.

"If one is going to give a Christmas dinner," he said, "it is best to give a good, even a lavish one. Then one doesn't get up from the table with remorse gnawing at the heart, as was the case last year with an Atlantic City young man. He took his fiancée and her mother to a Christmas dinner in a New York restaurant. Arriving at the restaurant a little before the ladies, he ordered the dinner, and then said to the waiter:

"Look here; I'll call for two quarts of champagne after the fish, but you just bring that champagne colder in the fancy bottle instead. It's good stuff, and the ladies won't know the difference."

"Very well, sir," said the waiter. "Then the ladies arrived, and the dinner progressed splendidly. The champagne was ordered, the elder was brought, and neither guest perceived the deception. On the contrary, they both praised the champagne. They drank heartily of it.

"But when the bill came at the dinner's end, the young man's face darkened. He beckoned to the waiter, and with nods and winks galore, pointed to the wine item.

"Waiter, there's some mistake about this charge, isn't there?" "Oh, no, sir," said the waiter. "Two bottles of champagne, eight dollars. That was what you ordered, sir."

"Certainly. We remember your ordering them," the ladies chorused.

"But—" said the young man, winking and nodding like a steam engine at the waiter.

"The bill is quite correct, sir," said the waiter, firmly.

"The ladies looked at him reproachfully, and the young man could do nothing but pay up."

It was a Sure Proof of Lunacy.

RUFUS L. GRISWOLD, the Cleveland educator who holds that it is wrong to let children believe in Santa Claus, was arguing about his strange views at a dinner.

"Why lie to children?" he asked. "Why let them believe in a myth? Whenever I hear mention of that loathed name of Santa Claus, I think of a lunatic. Some years ago I attended a trial. A witness was being examined as to the sanity of one of the inmates.

"You hold that this inmate is insane, do you?" a lawyer asked. "I do," was the firm reply.

"Why are you so sure?" "The man," the witness said, "goes about asserting that he is Santa Claus."

"And," said the lawyer, "you hold, do you, that when a man goes about asserting that he is Santa Claus, it's a clear proof of his insanity?"

"I do."

"Because," said the witness, in a loud, indignant voice, "I happen to be Santa Claus myself."

Had Earned Her Christmas Gift.

THERE are Christmas gifts and Christmas gifts," said Bishop Foss, "but the only acceptable ones are those given with a pure motive. In a crockery shop, during the holidays, I once saw the proprietor hand a plainly-dressed young woman a two-dollar bill. She looked at the bill, and said bitterly:

"Is that all? And durin' the past year ain't I broken 35 tumblers, 26 cups, nine meat platters, four saucers, 72 plates and 13 of the mistress' best tureens?"

"There, there," said the shopman, soothingly; "here's another dollar for you. And don't forget me, you know, he ended with a wink."

Sample of American Christmas Push.

SIR THOMAS LIPTON had been complimented by a New York reporter on the cup he had just offered.

"I ought to offer a cup," said the genial Briton, "to the retail shopkeeper who does the biggest Christmas trade. The size of your Christmas trade amazes me—it is handled.

"I heard the other day of a great Christmas bargain sale in Quincy. To one of the bargain counters a man was rash enough to venture. He struggled heroically a little while among the press, then, with a loud cry, he sank.

"Help, help!" he shouted from the floor. "Help! My leg is broken."

"The clerk, dextrous in the handling of Christmas crowds, got him.

"And you'll find our Christmas splints and crutches, sir," he said, "on third floor back, fifth aisle to left."

In the Interest of Peace on Earth.

ALFRED H. LOVE, the president of Universal Peace Union, told one day in Philadelphia a peace story.

"At this Christmas season," he said, "men talk sincerely about loving one another, about the universal brotherhood of man, and in the same breath they assert that it is right to burn and maim and kill in war. They are not so logical as a young colored recruit who served in the Philippines. This young man, at the end of his initial engagement, was hailed before his captain.

"So you ran at the first fire, did you?" said the captain, scornfully.

"Yes, sah; an' I'd 'a' run sooner, sah, if I'd knowed it wuz comin'."



CHRISTMAS, crowned with mirth and cheer, Sweet magnet-night of all the year, From field and city, camp and foam, Where'er our loved ones absent roam, Thy subtle spell from far and near Can draw them home.

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